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ABSTRACT

It is observed that teacher motivation can change drastically over the course of an individual teacher's career. This is particularly the case in Mexico with regard to teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), because the situation and role of Mexican EFL teachers has changed so significantly--especially in the wake of the passage of the NAFTA agreement. The outdated, grammar-based curriculum of EFL in Mexico was replaced with an entirely new and different communicative-based one. During this time the workload of teachers has increased enormously, although neither their salaries nor the quality of the physical infrastructure in which they work has been correspondingly upgraded. This has led to a decline in overall teacher morale and attitude. The basic premise of this study is that a motivated teacher provides more motivating learning experiences in the classroom and thus produces better-prepared students than un- or less-motivated teachers. This paper considers the motivating and de-motivating factors for Mexican EFL teachers. Questionnaire from study is appended. (Contains 12 references and 3 tables.) (KFT)

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Factors Influencing Motivation and De-Motivation in Mexican EFL Teachers

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Introduction

When many teachers begin their professions, doing research is the furthest thing from their minds. The first years of teaching are usually dedicated to getting the job done, obtaining experience and in some cases, just surviving in the classroom. As the years of experience and with it one's self-confidence as a teacher multiplies, unresolved issues tend to increase instead of decrease. By unresolved, I mean that teachers begin to question, for example "Why does an activity succeed for one group and not for another?", and this can lead to action research. Action research is a process by which teachers observe a problem, read all available information concerning the problem, come up with a research question, use their own situations to collect data, reflect on the data by discussing their findings with other teachers or writing about them in an attempt to answer the original question (Richards, 1998).

This article is not the result of an action research which usually involves a classroom based problem, but instead reports on the findings of descriptive research that explores a describes a problem without implementing a plan for change; However, it follows many of the same steps mentioned above. The problem that was identified for the present study concerns a dichotomy that I have observed during my 26 years of teaching EFL classes in Mexico. Teachers usually begin their careers highly motivated to teach. While some continue with the same level of motivation, others increase their motivation, and still others decrease in motivation and even fall into what I will call a de-motivated state.

During the past decade and a half, the changes within the Mexican teachers' reality have increased drastically. The emphasis from the government to change the educational system and its outdated curriculums in all areas has been substantial. But, the area of teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has especially been effected due to the NAFTA agreement that was signed at the beginning of the 1990s. The government's outdated traditional grammar-based English curriculum was replaced by a communicative

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based one, and teachers of both public and private institutions began to be trained in this method. During this time, the amount of work expected of English teachers due to the greater demands of the teaching profession increased noticeable even though neither salaries nor the physical infrastructures increased accordingly. In the author's opinion, this and other factors have contributed to changes in Mexican teachers' attitudes.

The basic premise of this study is that a motivated teacher provides more motivating learning experiences and, thus, produces better prepared learners than those teachers who fall into a de-motivated state. For this reason, the author's objective was to identify the motivating and de-motivating factors for Mexican EFL teachers in the hope that the elements lowering teacher motivation can be changed and thus learning improved.

Review of Literature

The study of learner motivation in second/foreign language acquisition has been a point of much discussion and research for decades, but it became an especially important topic after Gardner and Lambert published their results of a ten-year study in 1972. An even greater renewed interest in ESL/EFL learner motivation re-occurred during the 1990's. Studies by experts such as Dörnyei (1990; 1994a; 1994b, 1995), Oxford and Shearin (1994), Oxford and Ehrman (1995) among others initiated a rejuvenation of the topic. During the 1990's, the above mentioned authors and many more carried out studies to identify the characteristics of motivated ESL/EFL learners and/or lessons in the hopes that teachers could use this knowledge to motivate their own students.

The topic of teacher motivation as a factor effecting student learning which is the focal point of this article also began to be looked at seriously during the 1990's, and motivation as a criteria for effective teaching began to be considered as a serious educational research question. The area of job satisfaction and motivation to "do the job well" as opposed to only "get the job done" began to be explored as attitudes effecting the ESL/EFL learner's motivation to learn. Several factors that Freeman and Freeman (1994) identified as influencing language teachers in their work were 1) exposure to new ideas, 2)

the availability of materials and equipment, 3) the quality of colleagues and supervisors, and 4) the type of students they had.

Auerbach (1991) looked into a de-motivating state that many ESL/EFL teachers describe themselves in: "alienation". Alienation occurs when teachers who find it necessary to work more than one job for economic security cannot feel themselves to be a part of any one institution or group. These teachers are less likely to be in contact with new ideas because of their limited network of professional interactions. Also, they would not have the support of peers and colleagues due to their restricted contact-time at the schools.

Crooks (1997) found that several areas were crucial in the motivation or de-motivation of professional ESL/EFL teachers. One of these was that even though teacher training courses require a curriculum planing and design çomponent, in many teaching situations the curriculum and choice of textbooks are mandated from authorities above or outside the institution because of the need to prepare students for standardized tests. Another finding in Crooks study was that administrative top-down decision making was a sore point for many teachers. Teachers many times found themselves in positions where they felt forgotten and taken advantage of by their supervisors and perceived that they were not being given feedback on their job performance.

Alastair Pennycook (1989) suggested that situations where the teacher is required to teach using only one so-called "perfect" method endorsed by the institution is also a de-skilling experience for professionals.

> This suspicion can be found amongst academics . . . and amongst teachers who feel frustration at being told how to teach, sensing that there is little concordance between what the concept purports to describe and what is actually happening in their classrooms. In particular, many teachers in an EFL context question the usefulness of supposed methods to their own teaching contexts and resent their imposition by "experts" from abroad (p. 589).

After reading the above mentioned studies among others, the research question was formed. The question this research will attempt to answer is, "What are the factors that

increase or decrease the motivation in the EFL teachers in Mexico?" In this study, factors contributing to teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are interpreted as characteristics that can be identified as motivators and de-motivators for the teacher.

Data Collection

Since I had found in related studies that the majority of the results of the motivational and de-motivational factors for ESL/EFL teachers were generally centered within three areas, Curriculum, Institution and Classroom, it was decided to look into these more closely. In order to retrieve as many comments in as wide a range as possible, I decided to devise a partially controlled, but at the same time open-ended questionnaire. Teachers were asked to write motivational and de-motivational factors of their job(s) in the areas of Curriculum Matters, Institutional Matters and Classroom Matters (see appendix). These results will be reported qualitatively by presenting all the individual teachers' comments, and quantitatively by showing the percentages that the comments represent to the whole. After reading my interpretation, the readers can then make their own decisions about the findings.

The questionnaires used in this study were distributed to teachers in wide range of settings. Some were language teachers who attended an applied linguistics conference at the author's university, and others were attendees to various MEXTESOL local meetings and symposiums in different states of Mexico, as well as at the National MEXTESOL Convention. The first page of the questionnaire contained a short background section to gather information about the individual teachers such as years of experience, type(s) of educational institutions where they had worked and whether the schools were public or private (see appendix). The range of teachers completing the instrument was wide. There were representatives teaching classes in public as well as private institutions, in kindergarten, primary, secondary, high school, and university levels, and, of course, in private language institutes. The participants also had varying years of experience. In all, the sample of participants was considered by the researcher to be representative of Mexican teachers and school situations due to the fact that the results were gathered from a wide range of areas in Mexico and from EFL teachers representing many different backgrounds

and school situations. One of the author's original goals for this study had been to correlate the different variables (type of institution, years of experience, levels taught, etc.) with the comments made, but because Mexican teachers must work different jobs in multiple institutions and teaching situations, this goal was not possible to accomplish.

Results

In total ninety-eight teachers completed the forms making a total of 747 comments within the three areas provided. Many more questionnaires were distributed to teachers, but were not returned or were returned with no comments. This might be explained by the fact that teachers did not feel confident enough in their job positions to contribute information even though it was emphasized that the study was totally confidential. The responses that were received were read and coded by myself and my research assistant who is a native Spanish speaker. There were times when responses had to be moved from the category it had been written into another category because it was decided by the coders that the teacher had commented on, for example, a "curricular" matter in the "administrative" area. After the coding was concluded, it was found that of the 747 comments, 390 were listed as motivational factors (52%) and 357 comments (48%) were considered as de-motivational. For the purpose of this study, the factors have been divided into these two categories; however, the reader should keep in mind that a motivational factor can become a de-motivational one if that particular factor or need is not being adequately met in one's teaching situation. Thus, comments such as "good salary" in the motivational category and "low salary" in the de-motivational, represent the same factor only reversed. The results in each of the three main categories are reported in reverse numerical order with the sub-categories with lesser numbers being presented first and advancing to the sub-categories where more comments were made.

The category with the least amount of comments was that of Curricular Matters. There were a total of 117 comments with represented 16% of the total study. Of the 117 comments, 45were placed into the motivational category and 72 in the de-motivational. The comments fell into three sub-categories: Exams (4 comments), Textbooks (22 comments) and Curriculum (91 comments). Below, the reader can see the comments made. When more

than one comment has been recorded into one of the three areas, my research assistant and myself created a sub-area where we decided the teachers' comments should be placed. Any underlined words or phrases in the three areas indicate that this exact wording had been repeated many times.

Table 1

I. Curricular Matters as Motivational Factors (117 total comments = 16% of the study):

1. Exams (4 total comments)

MOTIVATING (1 comment)

- pre-made exams	(1)

DEMOTIVATING (3 comments)

- prescribed exams that do not accurately measure learning	(1)
- not being able to make changes to the prescribed exams	(1)
- not having a standardized exam given after the last level	(1)

2. Textbooks (22 total comments)

MOTIVATING (9 comments)

- up-to-date texts	(4)
- texts that meet the objectives	(4)
- having a teacher's edition	(1)

DEMOTIVATING (13 comments)

- poor, obsolete texts	(5)
- texts that arrive late	(2)
- textbooks that ignore the Mexican reality	(1)
- texts chosen by availability, not on student needs	(1)
- changing texts every year	(1)
- so many books, we can't finish them all	(1)
- inadequate texts for the level	(1)
- no textbooks	(1)

3. Curriculum (91 total comments)

MOTIVATING (35 comments)

- flexible curriculum that can be easily modified	(20)
- being asked to participate in decisions affecting the curriculum	(4)
- structured curriculum so that I know exactly what to do and when	(1)
- time to complete all the prescribed activities and exercises	(1)
- teacher training when the curriculum has been changed	(1)
- focus on the importance of the student & the acquisition process	(1)
- well structured curriculum that goes beyond the goals of SEP	(1)
- having a topic based curriculum	(1)
- having a focus on communication & context	(1)
- a curriculum that provides more freedom for the students	(1)
- a curriculum that fulfills the objectives	(1)
- that English has recently taken an important role in the	

Mexican curriculum	(1)
- a good curriculum that works	(1)
DEMOTIVATING (56 comments)	
- overloaded, inflexible curriculum	(24)
- no curriculum (or one written in "contrived" language) and no syllabus	(14)
- unreasonable expectations and goals	(5)
- an inflexible, inadequate curriculum	(2)
- not being asked to participate in elaborating the curriculum	(2)
- not able to include other topics/activities and still meet all the program goals	(1)
- only one year of English in the Prepa, then nothing for two years and the students forget.	(1)
- feeling that I know curriculum design better than the coordinator	
- lots of extra activities emphasized in the curriculum, but no time nor know-how to prepare them.	(1)
- curriculum that does not meet the needs of the students	(1)
- no pronunciation component	(1)
- teaching a class where the previous teacher had not completed the program	(1)
- when the curriculum is a textbook	(1)
- no objectives	(1)
- having to spend huge amounts of time creating a program	(1)

The second largest category of comments was that of Classroom Matters. This category contains 218 comments representing 29% of the total study. It contained 135 motivational comments and 83 de-motivational and included comments that revolved about two areas: Teachers and Students. For that reason, Table 2 below is organized into Motivating and De-motivating categories, and they contain how teachers are motivated or de-motivated by their students or by themselves which were the only two sub-categories the coders could identify.

Table 2

II. Classroom Matters as Motivational Factors (218 total comments = 29% of the study):

1. MOTIVATING (135 total comments)	
-Students: (126 comments)	
- see learning taking place/when they understand	(28)
- motivated students	(23)
- enthusiastic response from students	(19)
- activities go well	(18)
- active class participation	(12)
- when students have fun with songs/games/etc.	(7)
- students actively using the language	(5)
- noticeable progress	(4)
- respect for the teacher	(4)

- homework prepared as it should be (3)
- students loosing the fear of English (1)
- hearing students say that with you they are learning (1)
- helping students to express themselves (1)

-Teacher: **(9 comments)**

- when my activities, materials, dynamics work well (4)
- using role play (1)
- the contact with young people (1)
- to see myself grow professionally throughout the years and my teaching experience (1)
- the challenge of teaching (1)
- when the students write me notes telling me I'm their favorite teacher (1)

2. DEMOTIVATING (83 total comments)

-Students: **(79 comments)**

- apathetic students who don't care if they learn (40)
- negative attitude/lack of interest/unmotivated students (7)
- English is a requirement (5)
- high absenteeism and tardiness (4)
- students who don't participate nor bring materials/homework (3)
- students who openly say they don't like English (3)
- when activities bore students (3)
- disparity of levels within a class (3)
- forcing students to comply with homework (2)
- students using Spanish instead of English (2)
- students who don't pay attention (2)
- pressure from poor students to "pass" the class (1)
- students who don't see the importance of English (1)
- students who lack respect for the teacher (1)
- students who don't understand instruction no matter what is tried (1)
- teenagers (1)

-Teacher: **(4 comments)**

- the economic situation in Mexico that keeps students from being able to study (2)
- overwork (1)
- my inability to motivate students (1)

The third category, that was by far the largest, was that of Administrative Matters. The participants in the study made 412 comments (55% of the entire study) concerning the administration. Of these 209 comments were coded as motivational and 203 as de-motivational. However, differing from the other two previous categories which contain few sub-categories, this one contained comments that were divided into ten different sub-areas. The sub-divisions were training, salary, equipment, extra materials, mandated policies, physical space, academic freedom, colleagues, supervisors and an "other" sub-category

where comments that were did not fit the other sub-categories were placed. In Table 3 below, the reader can see the specific comments in each sub-division.

Table 3

III. Administrative Matters as Motivational Factors (412 total comments = 55% of the study):

1. Other (15 total comments.)

MOTIVATING (4 comments)

- classes Monday through Friday for about 70 hours of class per semester (SEP) (1)
- good schedule (1)
- teaching primary school where students are enthusiastic (1)
- not teaching in primary school (1)

DEMOTIVATING (11 comments)

- parents of students who cause problems (4)
- political problems that interfere with the school (2)
- constant changes of courses being taught (1)
- not having the opportunity to speak with native speakers (1)
- teaching secondary and prep. where students are rebellious (1)
- lack of discipline in the institution (1)
- "profit-only" mentality (1)

2. Training (22 total comments)

MOTIVATING (18 comments)

- lots of teacher training (17)
- opportunity to continually develop as a teacher (courses/scholarships) (1)

DEMOTIVATING (4 comments)

- no extra training (3)
- a training course where the trainer does not explain how to apply the information (1)

3. Salary (28 total comments)

MOTIVATING (3 comments)

- well paid (2)
- paid punctually (1)

DEMOTIVATING (25 comments)

- low salaries (25)

4. AV Equip./Labs (29 total comments)

MOTIVATING (24 comments)

- access to good audio/visual equipment (11)
- good laboratories/learning centers (13)

DEMOTIVATING **(5 comments)**

- no or a lack of audio, visual materials and equipment (5)

5. Accessibility to Extra Mat. (38 total comments)

MOTIVATING **(21 comments)**

- lots of extra materials we can use (20)
- receiving new, exciting materials (1)

DEMOTIVATING **(17 comments)**

- poor/non-existent extra materials (16)
- being told that there is not enough money to buy extra materials (1)

6. Mandated Policies (41 total comments)

MOTIVATING **(11 comments)**

- good class size (not too many nor too few) (7)
- having early classes (1)
- allowed to teach various classes of the same level (1)
- allowed to teach a variety of levels (1)
- changing students every 3 months (1)

DEMOTIVATING **(30 comments)**

- class size is too large (16)
- excess of paperwork (lesson plans/exams) (3)
- being made to teach levels or age groups that you don't want (2)
- classes spread throughout the entire day with no break (2)
- forced to follow the teacher's manual (1)
- having long breaks between classes (1)
- having to sign before each class (1)
- checking student notebooks by a certain time (1)
- not being allowed to remain in one course long enough to do it well (1)
- institutional pressure to continually prepare "fun/active" materials (1)
- teacher expenses to congresses are not refunded (1)

7. Physical Space (41 total comments)

MOTIVATING **(18 comments)**

- large, clean area in which to work and teach (10)
- English classroom which is not shared with another content class (3)
- access to: computers, printers, email, library (2)
- large class with desks that can move (2)
- opportunity and space for research (1)

DEMOTIVATING **(23 comments)**

- classroom is small, dark, dirty, like a prison, loud, poorly painted (13)
- desks that cannot be moved (4)
- poor installations (3)
- no electrical outlets (1)
- windows that students can see out of and, thus, they are continually distracted (1)
- there is no specific language classroom (1)

8. Academic Freedom (53 total comments)

MOTIVATING (40 comments)

- freedom to teach, organize, choose materials & activities, be creative, do what I feel necessary, change the program, etc. (30)
- participating in decisions (texts, teaching hours, levels) (10)

DEMOTIVATING (13 comments)

- no freedom to do anything different in your class (12)
- having to teach towards a school endorsed value system (1)

9. Colleagues (64 total comments)

MOTIVATING (32 comments)

- good, friendly work environment (18)
- teachers help each other with new ideas (6)
- professional atmosphere (3)
- team work attitude (2)
- working with colleagues who have a good academic preparation (1)
- working with different teachers (1)
- when my colleagues praise my work (1)

DEMOTIVATING (32 comments)

- apathetic colleagues (11)
- teachers who do not like change (texts, activities, teaching practices) (8)
- colleagues who do not want to develop professionally (6)
- more concerned about political issues than academic issues (3)
- just get the job done mentality (1)
- teachers who don't care if students learn (1)
- criticisms from another teacher about your class (1)
- closed mindedness about learner attitudes (1)

10. Supervisors (81 total comments)

MOTIVATING (38 comments)

- support and respect by the coordinator (23)
- recognition of a good job by the supervisor (7)
- being treated like an educated professional (3)
- getting constructive feed-back (2)
- open-minded principle (1)
- objective means of evaluation by bosses (1)
- coordination that supports a dynamic class with songs, games, etc. (1)

DEMOTIVATING (43 comments)

- supervisor who does not want change, is afraid of losing his job, does not want to listen to new ideas (9)
- coordinator who does not "praise" or "thank" the teachers (4)
- administration that does not view English teachers as professionals (4)
- apathetic coordinator (3)
- coordinator who lacks respect for teachers (3)
- a top-down supervisor (2)
- supervisor who gives you a book at the beginning of the year and that's all/provides no guidance (2)
- not having full support in disciplinary methods (2)

- administrators who take the part of the students over the teachers (1)
- coordinator who does not visit the classes (1)
- being treated like an unskilled laborer (1)
- not being taken into account in school planning (1)
- not knowing what level I will teach until the last day (1)
- having the boss looking over your shoulder (1)
- director and parents' lack of interest (1)
- bureaucracy (1)
- director puts up barriers against "unorthodox" activities (1)
- director thinks that a curriculum is following a textbook (1)
- supervisor mandates the teaching methodologies (1)
- director doesn't motivate the teachers (1)
- coordinator who tells me not to employ English customs in a Mexican style (1)
- my past coordinator (1)

Discussion

Even though the smallest category was Curricular Matters, that does not indicate that it was unimportant to the teachers. Few comments were made concerning exams, but more were made in the area of textbooks where the teachers were mainly concerned with having up-to-date texts that met the objectives of the class. By far the largest sub-category within this division was that of the curriculum itself. Here the comments mainly dealt with the necessity that the curriculum be flexible and not overloaded with so many objectives to meet that they would be impossible to attain. There were also comments (14) from teachers who had no curriculum or syllabus to guide them in the classroom. Another interesting finding was that teachers wanted to be involved in the development of the curriculum. Some participants found it motivating that they had been asked to participate and others recorded it as a de-motivator that they were not considered. This also lends support for Crookes (1997) findings that teachers found it de-motivating not to be asked to participate in curriculum planing or re-design.

The second largest category, Classroom Matters, largely included comments on how our students motivate (126 comments) and de-motivate (79 comments) us as teachers making a total of 205 comments in the study (*note: remember that the de-motivational comments represents the same as the motivational except inverted*). These numbers represent 27.4% of the comments in the entire study which is the highest percentage of any category. This fact can be interpreted as a significant but a not surprising fact. When we made the decision to become teachers, it was due to the reasons the teachers mentioned

such as seeing "learning taking place", having "motivated students", enjoying the "enthusiastic response" from our students, and having our "activities go well". As we well know, we didn't enter our profession for the salary; it was for the joy of transmitting knowledge and seeing their eyes widen when students finds out that they understand. This factor was also discussed in Freeman and Freeman (1994) and identified as "the type of student they had." The teachers themselves became a second sub-category because several comments (13) were made that centered on themselves as a motivating or de-motivating factor; however, these comments still focused on the students playing an important part. For example, "when my activities go well", "using role play" and "contact with young people" were motivating comments that teachers made which directly involve the learner. Also, two de-motivating comments ("the economic situation in Mexico that keeps students from being able to study") distinctly show how much these two teachers were concerned about the welfare of their students.

By far the largest category was that of Administrative Matters where 412 comments representing 55% of the study were made. In comparing this section with the other two, a major difference was that the comments were placed into ten different sub-categories whereas the first, Curricular Matters, had three sub-categories and the Classroom Matters had only two. It would seem that the participating teachers had many diverse and relevant comments concerning administration. The smallest sub-category, "Other", contains comments that did not fit into other sub-categories and includes personal remarks about specific problems or desires.

The next division, Training, shows us that teachers are motivated by training and de-motivated when they do not have access to it. This result was also mentioned in Freeman and Freeman (1994) as "exposure to new ideas." It is the authors personal opinion that many administrators do not offer teacher training because they think the teachers are overworked and do not want to stay extra hours to receive it. The 22 observations by the teachers in this area proves otherwise. The third area in an ascending order of importance was that of Salary. Almost all the comments fell into the de-motivational category and were reported in exactly the same words, "Low salary". The same as in Auerbach's study (1991),

it is also an unfortunate reality for Mexican teachers that many find it necessary to work in 2-3 different schools to make sufficient money to live; however, we can only hope that with the expanding need for qualified English teachers, the situation will improve.

In the fourth sub-category, Audio-Visual Equipment and Laboratories, all the comments referred to the access or no access to equipment to be used by teachers and students in reinforcing learning. The fifth area of comments dealt again with having or not having extra materials in their teaching situations to use in their classrooms. In these two sub-divisions which again correlate with findings by Freeman and Freeman (1994). We can see that teachers are aware of the importance of using or having access to educational technology in the learning process. We have read and been told in conferences and training sessions of the importance of using these to motivate our students. So, when we are denied access because the institution(s) does not provide extra learning aids, we feel that we are not able to fulfill our job commitments as well as we would like and feel de-motivated.

In both the sixth and seventh sub-categories, the first comments in the motivating and de-motivating divisions contain the majority of remarks showing the importance of these factors to teachers. In Mandated Policies, the importance of reasonable class size is emphasized and in Physical Space, the importance to the teachers of size, cleanliness, acoustics and other physical qualities of the classroom is shown. If teachers are expected to work two or more jobs in English classrooms, they need to have certain conditions met to enable them to feel more satisfied in their work space. Also, in the Academic Freedom sub-category, we find 42 out of 53 comments emphasizing the importance to the teacher to have the freedom to organize and teach the way they wish, make changes in activities and program, choose the materials they feel to be appropriate and be able to be creative in their classrooms. This supports Pennycook's (1989) finding that teachers resent being told how to teach and required to use one "perfect" method. Ten teachers commented that a motivating factor for them was being allowed to participate in making decisions about the choice of texts and having a voice in which levels they would teach.

The ninth sub-category illustrates the importance of having supportive professional colleagues where we work. Of the 64 comments made in the Colleagues sub-category, the split between motivating and de-motivating was exactly the same with 32 comments in each. The significance of having a friendly, professional work environment where teachers help each other and have an interest in professional development and change was evident in the teachers' comments. Teachers are motivated by their fellow teachers when they learn new activities from their peers or receive a positive comment and, in turn, they are de-motivated by apathetic colleagues who do not share their passion for teaching.

Finally, the sub-category within the Administrative Matters area that received the most comments was that of Supervisors. In this area, teachers made 81 comments (20% of the Administrative Matters Category), 38 motivating and 43 de-motivating. The majority of the motivating comments centered on having a supervisor/coordinator who shows respect and support to the teachers and having positive reinforcement for the job they are doing. The de-motivating comments were much more spread out in numbers; however, many teacher observations concerned supervisors who were apathetic, did not want change, did not recognize the teachers as professionals and never provided any positive comments for their hard work. The last two subcategories within Administrative Matters were also cited as factors that increased or decreased teacher motivation in Freeman and Freeman (1994) and were categorized as "the quality of colleagues and supervisors."

Of the fifteen sub-categories within the three main categories, the largest number of comments made in any sub-category was that of the students as a factor in teacher job satisfaction with 27.4% of the remarks in the entire study. The next closest category of comments came in the sub-division of Curriculum having 12% of the remarks and in third place were the teacher observations about supervisors (10.8%) followed by statements concerning the importance of colleagues (8.5%). The remainder of the remarks although interesting could not be considered as significant even though they do fall into the areas of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction found in the review of literature and supply supporting evidence to the studies mentioned previously. This finding should not be surprising to teachers since these four areas of Students, Curriculum, Supervisors and Colleagues are the

closest to the reality of any teacher. Most of our daily contact is in the classroom with our students preparing them to meet the objectives of the curriculum. Outside of the classroom we have close contact with our direct supervisors and our colleagues.

If one compares comments by ESL teachers from English speaking countries with the comments made by the EFL teachers in the present study, many are similar. ESL teachers must work in multiple teaching situations in low paying part-time jobs just to make enough money to support themselves. Teachers usually complain that they must comply with a curriculum that is not flexible enough or with textbooks they do not totally agree with, however, few ESL teachers would remark that they had to use "poor obsolete texts" that "arrived late" and that ignored there students' reality as did the Mexican teachers. The ESL teachers may want more audio-visual equipment and extra materials, but it is doubtful that they would say that they had "no extra materials" or "no audio-visual equipment" to count on. Teachers would always like to make physical changes to their classrooms or teaching situations, but again, the author questions that many ESL teachers would describe their physical space as "small, dark, dirty, like a prison, loud, poor installations with desks that cannot be moved and with no electrical outlets in the room." Of course, if those of us who have been teaching in Mexico for multiple years think of what the classrooms and teaching situations were like 25 years ago and compare with what we have now, the difference is enormous. Mexico has improved as all the positive comments made by the teachers in the study show. Mexico is in a time of change. The growing importance of the learning and teaching English is evident where ever we go, and for this reason, it is a certainty that the working conditions of the Mexican EFL teacher will continue to improve in the coming years.

Conclusion

As I stated at the beginning of this article, the present study began with a simple observation that some Mexican EFL teachers maintain or increase their level of motivation to teach throughout their careers while the motivation of others decreases proportionately with their years of teaching. I read articles and books concerning teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction and reasons that had been found to account for this phenomenon. I then

formulated my research question and used my contact with EFL teachers at conferences in many parts of Mexico to collect data. I have presented these findings and talked with many teachers about them in various conventions in Mexico and at the TESOL Convention in Vancouver in March 2000. By writing this article, I am reflecting on my findings and attempting to pull together my thoughts in order to answer my original question, "What are the factors that increase or decrease the motivation in the EFL teachers in Mexico?" I feel the results shown in the three tables represent the majority of factors affecting Mexican EFL teacher motivation and by reflecting on my 26 years of experience of teaching in Mexico, it is my opinion that the factors found in this study accurately reflect the elements that began my quest.

I would like to end by sharing a true experience that occurred on February 14, 2001 that I feel nicely illustrates one of the motivating factors found in this study. My student in the first basic course who had entered my class with a very low level of English but who was making steady progress gave me a valentine's card which said, "Teacher, que padre es tener a una profesora como usted y que siempre nos regala una sonrisa, y que es simbolo de lucha y sabiduria. ¡ Gracias por aportar su conocimiento y amistad hacia mi persona !" (*Teacher, it's great to have a professor like you who always gives us a smile, and is a symbol of struggle and wisdom. Thank you for sharing with me with your knowledge and friendship !*) After reading the card, I gave the student a hug and told him (in Spanish) that they were students like him that helped me to be able to smile each day when I enter class and who motivate me to teach my classes.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Factors Affecting EFL Teachers' Motivation in Mexico

We as teachers all remember the first time we walked into our very own English classroom. We were excited to begin using all the wonderful ideas we had learned in our years of study. This questionnaire is meant to explore what has motivated us throughout the years and what factors have been problematic and, thus, de-motivated us.

Please take a few minutes to mark/answer **(Spanish or English)** the following **ANONYMOUS** questionnaire.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Is your school(s) **Private** _____ or **Public** _____ or **Both** _____
In which situation(s) do you teach?
Primary _____ **Secondary** _____ **Preparatory** _____
Institute _____ **University** _____
Years of teaching experience: _____

Please answer the following questions providing at least one idea in each area. If you work at more than one school mentioned above, please make it clear in your comments in which situation the "motivating" or "de-motivating" factor occurs or occurred.

QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Institution(s)/Administration(s) where you work or have worked

What is/was motivating?

What is/was de-motivating?

II. Curriculum(s) where you work or have worked

What is/was motivating?

What is/was de-motivating?

III. Classroom practices where you work or have worked

What is/was motivating?

What is/was de-motivating?